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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: LONDON BOMBINGS

Summary: All the major Taipei dailies gave considerable coverage July 8 to the blasts that ripped through London Thursday morning and their impact on global stocks and financial markets. All the newspapers in Taipei carried wire service reports of the bombings in London on their front and first few pages, and most of them described the blasts as "terrorist attacks." Nonetheless, there was only one commentary and one op-ed piece (in the centrist "China Times") published July 8 that commented on the blasts in London or the global war on terrorism. Washington correspondent Liu Ping said the "war of injustice" [i.e. the war in Iraq] launched by the United States and Britain using made-up reasons has failed to obtain better security for the two countries. A separate op-ed piece in the newspaper by Kan Yi-hua, associate research fellow at National Chengchi University's Institute of International Studies, predicted that the blasts would very likely have an impact on the global war on terrorism and the dynamic development of world power in the future. End summary.

A) "Has the World Become Safer in the wake of War on Terrorism?"

Washington correspondent Liu Ping noted in the "My Views" column of the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] (7/8):

". The bombings that took place in London [Thursday] could also possibly happen in the subways of New York and Washington, DC. The United States can conduct very thorough security checks on airline passengers (forcing some of the passengers traveling between Washington and New York to travel by train [rather than by plane]), but how is it going to carry out security checks on millions of subway passengers?

"An extremely important job for preventing terrorist attacks is [that of] intelligence collection, especially of intelligence sources from within the Islamic world. But given the [rising] anti-American sentiments [in the Islamic world] today, the reliability and stability of such intelligence is questionable. As a result, the [preservation of the] security of the United States and its allies is also a challenge.

"The irony lies in the fact that within the Islamic world, Iraq is in reality the country that is most tolerant of Christianity. While the American soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia were only allowed to celebrate Christmas inside their closed-up tents, Saddam Hussein of Iraq had already agreed earlier that Christmas would be a national holiday.

"The United States and United Kingdom jointly launched a war of injustice using made-up reasons, but in fact, the war [in Iraq] has failed to obtain better security for them. [The result] is just like what Senator John McCain, a Republican like U.S. President George W. Bush, has said recently: 'We are now paying a heavy price for the mistakes we made earlier.'"

B) "The Campaign against Terrorism Will Generate an Impact to the World Again"

Kan Yi-hua, associate research fellow at National Chengchi University's Institute of International Studies, commented in an op-ed piece in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] (7/8):

". Thursday's terrorist attacks in London will likely generate a profound impact. The immediate impact will be on the G-8 summit currently held in Britain. [Before the blasts in London,] anti-terrorism was no longer regarded as a major issue on the agenda for the G-8 summit, which would originally focus on poverty in

Africa and global warming issues. But since the terrorist attacks took place in the United Kingdom and have evidently targeted the G-8 summit, the issue of the war on terrorism will likely become the focus of the agenda again.

"In terms of the United Kingdom's domestic politics, it was generally expected that British Prime Minister Tony Blair's remaining political career will not last too long following the parliamentary elections [scheduled for] May 5. But now given Britain's leading position in the G-8 summit, its [soaring] reputation regarding holding the [2012] Olympic Games, and especially the sorrow, rage and unity demonstrated by the British people following the blasts in London, one must not think too little of Blair's future political career.

"In addition, when it comes to the U.S.-led global war on terrorism, the terrorist attacks against Britain will further legalize the actions of the coalition forces. The uninterrupted war on terrorism by the United States and the United Kingdom will have an impact on the relations between the two countries and France, Germany and Russia - those that opposed the war in Iraq. The terrorist bombings in London will thus likely affect the dynamic development of world power in the future."

KEEGAN